

# Get to the Root of It!

## Tutorial 6

Holy Communion  
in the Armenian Church  
Stages 6-8

Year of Church and Home 2007

## 8 Stages of Holy Communion

- Greet Each Other
- Remember why we are gathered
- Give Thanks
- Pray for our Spiritual Family
- Praise the Hosts
- Clean up before Eating
- Eat/Take Communion
- Say Thanks and Goodbye

In this tutorial we will go over the last three stages of Holy Communion, 6, 7 and 8. To review, the Lord's Supper may be viewed as having several stages that form a coherent whole and serve as a framework for Holy Communion in the Armenian and other Christian churches. For example, We greet each other, we pray before we eat, we eat and say thanks and goodbye.

## 8 Stages of Communion - Intermediate Stages

- Greet Each Other
- Remember why we are gathered
- Give Thanks
- Pray for our Spiritual Family
- Praise the Hosts
- Clean up before Eating
- Eat/Take Communion
- Say Thanks and Goodbye

In addition, we can discern four intermediate stages, after saying hello and before going to the table, we remember why we are gathered and give thanks. Before eating, we praise our hosts and clean up before eating. Thus it forms a logical sequence from Greeting to Goodbye.

## 8 Stages of Holy Communion

1. Greet Each Other
2. Remember why we are gathered
3. Give Thanks
4. Pray for our Spiritual Family
5. Praise the Hosts
6. Clean up before Eating
7. Eat/Take Communion
8. Say Thanks and Goodbye

In this tutorial we will go over the 6th, 7th and 8th stages of Holy Communion. Having greeted each other in the first stage, in the second stage we remember why we are gathered, in the third, we give thanks, in the fourth, before eating, we pray for our spiritual family, and in the fifth, we praise the Hosts, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Now that we are nearly ready to take communion, we must first clean up by saying confession and asking God's mercy in Stage 6, then Eat or Take Communion in Stage 7, and having partaken of the Lord's Supper, we say thanks and goodbye in Stage 8.

## Stage 6 - Clean up before Eating

- **Stage 5** ends with praise for the Holy Trinity, our Hosts
- **Stage 6** begins with our General Confession, during which we express our regret for having wronged our most gracious hosts
- **Kyrie, *Der voghormya***, plaintive chant for leniency for our wrongdoing and peace in the world, healing for the sick, rest for the departed. (See separate tutorial)

Having just finished glorifying the Holy Trinity in Stage 5 with the Doxology, the *parapanutyun* in Armenian, we now are nearly ready to take communion. As with any meal, before eating we clean up. Since this is a spiritual meal as well as a physical meal, we clean up spiritually by general confession of any wrong doing (sin), which though directed at other people, causes harm and pain to our Creator and Host, the Holy Trinity. We also sing a plaintive chant, *Der Voghormya* (the *Kyrie eleison* - Lord have mercy), in which we ask for leniency for our wrongdoing, peace in the world, healing for the sick, rest for the departed. The General Confession is often conducted in both the vernacular and Church Armenian. The *Kyrie* is the subject of a separate tutorial.

## Key Texts

### *Megha Asdudzo*

I have sinned against the All-Holy Trinity,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I have sinned against God.

### *Der voghormya*

Lord, have mercy, All-Holy Trinity

Give peace to this world

And healing to the sick

love and unity to the Armenian nation.

Jesus, Savior, have mercy on us.

As you can see, the text in this section is short and largely made up of words used in other parts of the service. Since the *Der voghormya* (Kyrie) is the subject of a separate tutorial, we will focus on the other key words in this section.

## Megha Asdudzo Մեղայ Աստուծոյ

- *megha* = 'sin' ⇨ Eng./Lat. **malice**
  - gh~l correspondence

մեղայ Ամենասուրբ Երրորդութեանն

*megha Amenasurp Yerrort-utyann*

I have sinned against the All-Holy Trinity

- *amena-surp* = 'all' + 'holy'
  - ⇨ assembled, same
- *yerr-ort-utyann* = 'trinity'
  - yerr* = ⇨ 'three' *ort*= -rd *utyun*= 'tion' *n*= ⇨ 'yon'

*Megha Asdudzo* 'I have sinned against God.' is one of the 7 phrases for active knowledge and participation in Holy Communion. We say it during General Confession and at the altar just before the Priest places the communion wafer in our mouth. Repeat it: *Megha Asdudzo*.

*Megha* is related to the English/Latin word **malice, malicious**, exhibiting the gh~l correspondence, as in Arm. *Boghos*, Eng. Paul. It means that we have been destructive or wasteful of our God-given world or time or talents. At the beginning of every Badarak, we say, *na arar zmez yev voch mek eak*. "God created us and not we ourselves" (from Psalm 101). This destructiveness (*char*, negation of creation, the prefix *ch* meaning 'not', and the root meaning *-ar*) is an offense against God the creator (*ararich*), who gave us those gifts freely with hoped that we would use them well. But we ungratefully, thoughtlessly abused these gifts, by treating ourselves, the world and other creatures maliciously, badly, and this pains our heavenly Father and Creator. For the pain and destruction we have caused, we ask forgiveness.

A longer form of this confession is *megha amenasurp yerrort-utyann* I have sinned against the All-Holy Trinity.

•*Megha* as we just saw means 'I have sinned',

•*Amenasurp* means 'All-Holy' and is composed of two roots - *amena* 'all' as in *hamenayni* 'in all things are you blessed, O Lord' and *amenekyan* as in *Arpek i smane amenekyan* 'Drink from this all of you'. *Amena* is related to the root **am** in English assembled, same.

•*Yerr-ort-utyann* which means 'trinity' has 4 components. The main root is *yerr* which means 'three' and is related to Eng./Lat. *three, trio, trinity*. This word evolved quite a bit in Armenian. Although we don't know the exact stages, the following progression seems likely, since the initial consonant combination was difficult to pronounce, a helping vowel *ye* was added to the beginning, resulting in *yetri*, later the *tr* was simplified to *rr*, giving the current root *yerr*. The *ort* is the standard ordinal suffix, changing counting numbers from *one two three*, to numbers showing order, *first, second, third, fourth*. The *-utyann* suffix is a variant of *utyun*; meaning 'of' and is parallel to Eng./Lat. *-tion*'s. The final *-n* means 'the, yon, the one by him.'

## *Der voghormya*

- Kyrie eleison - Lord have mercy
- a late addition to the Holy Communion rite (18th century)

Having confessed our sins, we ask for God's mercy in this hymn. The phrase *Der voghormya*, 'Lord have mercy' is encountered very frequently in Armenian Church services, so much so, that many people who know no Armenian come away knowing this phrase after attending only one service. This hymn is the subject of a separate tutorial. It is one of the 5 key hymns you should try to learn, if not for actively singing, at least for passive understanding. Although the phrase is very common, the hymn is a late 18th-century addition to the service by the Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi.



## Stage 7 - Eat/Take Communion

- **Priest:** 'This is life, hope of resurrection, pardon and forgiveness of sins.'
- **The deacons instruct:** 'In fear and faith come forward and with holiness take communion.'
- **The choir celebrates this moment,** with the Communion Hymn,
- After Communion, the choir sings, 'Blessed is He who has come in the name of the Lord'

Finally, the moment comes to take communion. The priest announces: "This is life, hope of resurrection, pardon and forgiveness of sins."

The deacons instruct: "In fear and faith come forward and with holiness take communion." And the choir celebrates this moment with the Communion Hymn, which has Alleluia as its refrain. *Alleluia* is Hebrew for 'praise the Lord'. The Communion hymn is presented in a separate tutorial. After Communion, the choir sings, 'Blessed is He who has come in the name of the Lord', which we already encountered in the Sanctus.

## This is life Մա է կեանք

- Մա է կեանք, յոյս յարութեան,

*Sa e gyank, huys harutyun,*

This is life, hope of resurrection,

- *gyank* = 'life' ↔ Eng. **q**uick, **v**ital, **b**iology  
as in *yegestse* convene **c**ome **b**asis (go toward) **g~v~b** correspondence
- *huys* = 'hope' *harutyun* = 'resurrection' to get up,  
*i* (i>h)+ *arnel* 'make, do'

Finally, the moment comes to take communion. - The priest announces:

'This is life, hope of resurrection, pardon and forgiveness of sins.' Listen to the priest: *Sa e gyank, huys harutyun, kavutyun yev toghutyun meghats.*

The 2nd part, *kavutyun yev toghutyun meghats* should be familiar from Stage 2, the institution of the Lord's Supper. *Ays e marmin im Ays e aryun im i kavutyun yev i toghutyun meghats* 'This is my body, this is my blood . . . for the pardon and forgiveness of sins" Not surprisingly, these same words are repeated in the call to communion.

The first part is different however: The two new words in this phrase are *gyank* 'life' and *huys* 'hope'.

*Gyank* = 'life' is related to Eng. quick, Lat. vital, and Greek. biology. It exhibits the same correspondence as in the Lord's Prayer, *yegestse arkayutyun ko*. 'May it come' *yegestse* convene **c**ome.

*huys* = 'hope'.

## Pardon and Forgiveness of Sins

- քավութիւն եւ թողութիւն մեղաց:  
*kavutyun yev toghutyun meghats.*  
pardon and forgiveness of sins.
- *toghutyun* = 'forgiveness' ↔ Eng. *toleration*,  
as in Lord's Prayer, *togh mez zbardis mer*
- *meghats* = 'of sins' ↔ Eng. *malice*  
both exhibit *gh~l* correspondence

Now the second part: *kavutyun yev toghutyun meghats.*

*toghutyun* = 'forgiveness' Armenian word for *forgiveness* is related to Eng. *toleration*, as in the Lord's Prayer, *togh mez zbardis mer.*

*meghats* = 'of sins' Eng. *malice*. with the *-ats* ending meaning plural possessive.

## Come forward in fear and faith and take communion.

Երկիրդի եւ հաւատով յառաջ մատիք

*yergyughiv yev havadov harach madik*

*yergyughiv* = 'with fear' -iv = 'with'

*havadov* = 'with faith' -ov = 'with'

*harach* = 'forward'

*madik* = 'approach' → Eng. meet, Arm. *mod*.

Now the deacon instructs us to approach, Listen:

*Yergyughiv yev havadov harach madik*

•*yergyughiv* = 'with fear' has 2 components. We have seen this word before at the end of Stage 1 of Holy Communion. *Ahiv gatstsuk, yergyughiv gatstsuk*. 'Let us stand in fear'. As explained there, the suffix *-iv* and the related suffix *-ov*, which we see in the next word *havadov*, mean 'with'. As for the root, *yergyugh* is related to the *dino* in English *dinosaur*, which means 'frightening lizard'. You can find the explanation for this dramatic change in sounds in the tutorial for Stage 1.

•*havadov* = 'with faith'. this word also has 2 components. The root *havad* is quite common in Church Armenian, but it does not have a cognate in English. We see *havad* in the Creed, *havadamk* - we believe, where the suffix *-mk* meaning 'we' is added to *havad*. *Havad* 'faith' is one of the 4 things we ask for at Baptism. We just saw one of the others in the previous slide *huys* 'hope'. Do you remember the other two? Charity or love which in Armenian is *ser*, and of course *mgrdutyun* 'baptism'. So remember, *Havad, huys ser yev mgrdutyun*, 'faith, hope, love and baptism' are the 4 things asked for at Baptism.

•*harach* = 'forward' this word has the same root as *arachi ko der* 'before you, Lord' which we say during the Peace Blessing. Here, it has a prefix *h-* indicating direction, from the preposition *i* which, as you'll recall, becomes *h* before vowels, as in Our Father who art in heaven. *Hayr mer vor hergins es, i + yergins* becomes *hergins*.

•*madik* = 'approach', this word also has two components the *-ik* suffix, which like its variants *-ek* and *-etsek*, create plural command forms. As for the root, *mad*, it is related to Eng. *meet* and Arm. *mod* 'near'. When we approach something we come near it or aim to meet it.

## Communion Hymn

- One of Oldest Christian Hymns
- Refrain: Alleluia - Praise the Lord.
- Separate tutorial

This hymn is the subject of a separate tutorial.

It is one of the oldest Christian hymns, calling people forward to take communion. The verses are interspersed with the Hebrew word Alleluia, an expression of joy, meaning 'Praise the Lord.'

## Communion Etiquette

1. Cross yourself,
2. Say *Megha Asdudzo* Մեղայ Աստուծոյ 'I have sinned against God'
3. Open your mouth
4. Priest places a piece of wine-soaked wafer in mouth, saying Աստուած թողութիւն շնորհեցէ *May God Grant you forgiveness.*
5. Cross yourself and allow the wafer to dissolve in your mouth, then swallow.

Communion Etiquette. Line up in an orderly and dignified manner. When you approach the Priest distributing communion: (1) cross yourself, (2) say *Megha Asdudzo* 'I have sinned against God', (3) Open your mouth and the priest will place a piece of wafer soaked in wine in your mouth, saying *Asdvadz toghutyun shorhestse* 'May God Grant you forgiveness', (4) Cross yourself and allow the wafer to dissolve in your mouth, then swallow.

## Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord

- All 4 Gospels: Matthew 21:9, 23:39, Mark 11:9, Luke 13:35, John 12:13.
- Օրհնեալ եկեալ անուամբ Տէառն *Orhnyal yegyal anvamp Dyarn*
  - *orhnyal*='blessed' -*yal* ='ed'
  - *yegyal*='who comes' ↔ *convene*, *come*
  - *anvamp*='in name' ↔ *name*
  - *Dyarn*='of Lord' ↔ *di+ayr* ↔ *dignity* *teacher* + *android*

After communion, the choir announces, "Blessed is He who has come in the name of the Lord." We've seen this in the Sanctus (Stage 2) and the subject of a separate tutorial. We find this phrase in all 4 Gospels.

*orhnyal* = 'blessed'. This is one of the most common words in Church Armenian. The root is *orhn-* and the ending *-yal*, which is equivalent to English *-ed*, and forms verbal adjectives. Related words from this root are *orhnutyun* 'blessing' *orhnya* 'bless!'

*yegyal* = 'who has come'. The root is *yeg* and the ending *-yal*, which we also saw in *orhnyal*, meaning *-ed*, past participle. The root is related to English *come*, and the *ven* of *convene*. It exhibits the *g~c/qu~v* correspondence we have also seen in *gyank*, *quick*, *vital*.

*anvamp*='in name'. The root is *anun* and is related to English *name*, *noun*. The *-p* at the end means 'with, by'. The *-p* is also related to the *iv*, *ov* endings we saw in *yergyughiv yev havadov* 'with fear and faith' and exhibits the *v~p* correspondence, as in Stephen-Steven. This ending is more distantly related to the *-ibus* on the end of *I pluribus unum* 'out of many one', which you may recognize from the motto on US currency, in reference to the creation of one country out of many states.

*Dyarn*='of Lord' This is the possessive form of *Der*. *Der* as we have seen has two components, *di* which is related to *dignity* and *ayr* which is related to the *android* 'the study of man', together, 'dignified man' or 'Lord'.

## Stage 8 - Say Thanks and Goodbye

1. Priest's blessing - *Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.*
2. Hymns of Thanks
3. Dismissal Psalms (Ps. 113:2, 34:1)
4. Final Blessing - *Go in peace and may the Lord be with you all. Amen.*

We are now at the last Stage of the Holy Communion. Having partaken of the Lord's Supper, it is now time to say thanks and goodbye. This portion of the Holy Communion service was added after the 11th century. The Priest's Blessing was the end of the service, and is in fact said twice in this last Stage. After that, the curtain is closed to permit the Priest and Deacons to clean the vessels and put the Holy Table *Surp Seghan* in order before descending among the people for the final gospel and blessing. While this happens, the Choir sings Hymns of Thanks, with melodies reminiscent of the Lord's Prayer, *Ltsak* 'we are filled' and *Kohanamk* 'we give thanks'. Once the Priest and Deacons have descended from the altar, the choir and people sing the dismissal Psalms 'May the name of the Lord be blessed for evermore' and 'I shall praise the Lord at all times'. To end the ceremony, the Priest gives the final blessing 'Go in peace'.



## Lord, Save thy People

Կեցո Տէր զժողովուրդս քո

*Getso Der z-zhoghovurt-s ko*

Save Lord people your

- *getso* = 'save' → *vital*, *quick* same root as *gyank* 'life'
- *zhoghovurt* = 'people' collected *z-* prefix='direct object'

Էւ օրհնէա զժառանգութիւնս քո:

*yev orhnya z-zharankutyuns ko.*

and bless inheritance your

- *zharankutyun*='inheritance'

The blessing after communion, which is taken from Psalm 28:9, has many words we've already seen. *Der* = 'Lord', *ko*='your', *orhnya*='bless'.

Now let's look at it phrase by phrase:

*Getso Der z-shoghovurt-s ko* 'Lord, save thy people'

*getso*='save'. The root of this word is the same as *gyank* 'life'. 'To save' is to make 'to live'. It is related to English *quick*, *vital*, *biology*, and exhibits the g~c~v~b correspondence we see, for example, in the word 'come', Arm. *yeg*- Eng. *come*, *convene*.

*zhoghovurt* ='people'. The root of this word is *zhoghov* 'gathering'. The *z-* prefix indicates that people is the direct object of the verb *getso* 'save'.

The second phrase is, *yev orhnya z-zharankutyuns ko* 'and bless thy inheritance'.

*zharankutyun*='inheritance'. The root is *zharank* with the noun suffix *-utyun*.

## Hymns of Thanks

- լցաք *ltsak* = 'we are filled' ⇔ full, plenty
- գոհանամք *kohanamk* = 'we thank'

These two hymns of thanks are sung after Communion. Let's listen to them.

*Ltsak* = 'we are filled' The root of this verb is 'li' and the ending *tsak* = 'we have been' We have seen this root in the Sanctus, Surp, Surp, - *li en yergink yev yergir parok ko* 'the heavens and earth are filled with your glory'. This root is related to the English words *full, plenty*, where the initial p/f have been absorbed into the *l*, as in for instance Spanish *llama* from *claim* 'to be called'.

*Kohanamk* = 'we thank' as we saw in the Thanksgiving Hymn *Hamenayni, Kohanamk z-ken der*. *Koh* = 'satisfied' and the suffix *-mk* = 'we'

## Dismissal Psalms (Psalm 113:2) Blessed be the name of the Lord

Եղիցի անուն Տեառն օրհնեալ  
let be name of Lord blessed

- *yeghitsi* = 'let be'

յայսմհետէ մինչեւ յաիտեան:  
from now until forever.

- *haysmhede* = 'from now' i/h = 'from' *aysm* = → this, *hede* = → 'feet, pedestrian'
- *minchev* = 'until'

As the priest and deacons descend from the altar, the first dismissal psalm, Psalm 113:2, is sung. Listen:

This verse is repeated 3 times. We've seen most of these words before in other contexts.

*yeghitsi* = may it be, as in the Lord's Prayer Hallowed be thy name *Surp yeghitsi anun ko*.  
*anun* = 'name' *dyarn* = 'of the Lord' *orhnyal* = 'blessed', *havidyan* = 'forever'

A couple of new words:

*haysmhede* = 'from now' This word consists of 4 components, the preposition *i*, reduced to *h* before the vowel *a*, meaning 'from', *aysm* which is related to the word 'this'. Note the -s in both words, and *hed* = 'feet', *pedal*, exhibiting the *h~f~p* correspondence we have seen in *hayr*, *father*, *paternal*, finally it ends in -e meaning from, as in *i chare* 'from evil'.

*minchev* = 'until'

Dismissal Psalms (Psalm 34:1)  
I shall bless the Lord at all times

օրհնեցից զտէր յամենայն ժամ,  
*orhnetsits zder hamenayn zham*

յամենայն ժամ օրհնութիւն Նորա ի բերան իմ:  
*hamenayn zham orhnutyun nora i peran im*

at all times his blessing in my mouth

*nora* = 'his' → 'that one, yon' + *-r* adjective suffix as  
in Arm. *me-r* = 'our'

This psalm is sometimes said by the Deacon, but also frequently sung: Listen:

Nearly all of the words are familiar from earlier hymns:

- *orhnetsits* = 'I shall bless' is from the root 'orhn' 'to bless'
- *zder* = 'Lord' with the *z*-prefix indicating that *Lord* is the direct object of 'I shall bless'
- *hamenayn* = 'at all' as in *hamenayni* 'in all things'
- *zham* = 'hour', also chapel, where prayers are said *hourly*.
- *nora* = 'his', the root is *na* = 'that one, yon' with the *-r* adjective suffix, as in *me-r* 'our'
- *peran* = 'mouth'

## Final Blessing/Goodbye

Երթայք խաղաղութեամբ եւ Տէր եղիցի ընդ  
ձեզ ընդ ամենեսեանդ Ամէն:

*Yertayk khaghaghutyamp yev Der yeghitsi ěnt  
tsez ěnt amenesyant amen.*

*yertayk='go' -k= 'you! pl.'*

*ěnt tsez = 'with you' ⇨ and, under*

*ěnt amenesyan-t = 'with you all' am ='all'  
⇨ assembled, -t = 'that, the one by you'*

This is the final blessing. 'Go in peace and God be with you all. Amen.' *Yertayk khaghahutyamp yev Der yeghitsi ent tsez ent amenesyant. amen.*

Nearly all of these words are familiar from other hymns and phrases.

- *khaghakhutyamp* = 'in peace, with peace' is the same word as in the Peace Blessing
- *ěnt* = 'with, under'
- *tsez* = you
- *amenesyant* = 'you all' The root is *am* as in *hamenayni*, related to the *-am-* in English *assembled*, *same*. The *-t* suffix is related to English 'that, the one by you'

The last phrase, *Der yeghitsi unt tsez unt ameneseant*, means 'God be with you all'. It is interesting that this was once so common a farewell that in English it was shortened to *good-bye*. We regularly use 'Good-bye' further shortened to 'bye, or 'bye-bye'. Note that another common farewell, *so long*, also has its roots in this dismissal blessing. 'So long' is actually a misspelled form of the Arabic *salaam* 'peace', Hebrew *shalom*, both of which mean 'peace'.

The final blessing dismissing the people so impressed itself on the public, that the entire service came to be known as the *Mass*, from the Latin word to *dismiss*. Holy Communion is ultimately about reconciliation with God and with each other. By the end of the service, after 3 peace blessings, we receive the final blessing to go forth in peace in to the world, where we are to share the message and share the light, so that others, seeing our works and the kind way we treat each other, will know we are Christians and glorify our Father, who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-14).